



Ford Focus - A bigger power steering job

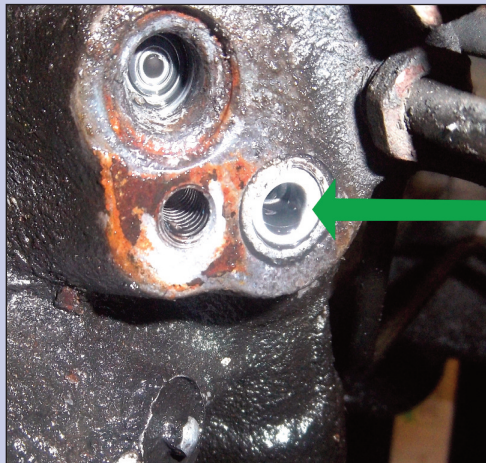
The most notable thing about the problem on this 2003 Ford Focus was that the owner was unaware that he had a problem. The vehicle had come in for its annual service and the first thing we noticed was the notchy feel of the steering. Giving the motor a quick test drive we were immediately concerned with the amount of play in the steering rack.

When this was pointed out to the owner, he confirmed that he was aware of it, but believed that it was just because the Focus was getting old. If we had known the problems we were going to run into we would have left it there, but we priced up for a new steering rack and the owner agreed that we should fit one.

It was when we came to remove the power steering pipes into the rack that our problems began. The single bolt holding the securing bracket came undone easily, but the pipes would not shift.

These are only held in place with a small fixing bracket, with a rubber O ring to seal the joint. A gentle wiggle is normally all that is required to remove the pipe. In this case a wiggle didn't work!

Continual movement eventually freed it from the rack, not because it had come out but because



The Power steering pipe refused to release from the steering rack and fractured

the pipe had fractured.

We now needed not only a new steering rack, but also a pair (they only come in pairs) of power steering hoses. These actually cost more than the rack and we now had to explain to the owner why the cost had risen. Thankfully, he was understanding and when the vehicle was returned to him, he did notice the difference with the feel of the steering.

ROVER 620 - Easy to test ABS with meter

The ABS light had flagged up on this 1997 Rover 620 a few weeks previously, the owner had decided to live with the light for a while, but now the NCT was looming. He knew that the glowing ABS light would not go down well.

With a newer vehicle, the easiest way would be to plug in the scanner and read off the fault codes. With a 1997 Rover the old methods

are the best.

The sensors to each wheel have a connecting plug, on the front these are under the bonnet and at the rear these are located in the boot. Disconnecting the four plugs and using an ohm meter on each plug should soon show up a faulty sensor.

It is not necessary to know exactly what the sensor should read. When checking all four, the one that does not match the other three is the culprit. On this Rover, that turned out to be the nearside rear sensor. This for some reason often seems to be the case.

One we had possession of the new sensor the next task was to fit it. The sensor itself is easy to fit, but the long cable which winds its way into the boot space took a little longer.

Once the motor was driven up the road, the ABS light was extinguished and the Rover could be handed back to its happy owner.



Putting a meter across the ABS connecting cables is the quickest way to test the system.

Washer fluid or pea soup?



The washer fluid was more the consistency of a pea soup.

This 2006 Opel Corsa had been bought into us with a list of problems, one of which was that the windscreen washers were not working. The additive the owner had been using was so thick that the pump had failed. On this model Corsa, this is a simple task and the washer reservoir was drained and a new pump fitted.

Washer fluid can sometimes be a dangerous liquid. We have often, when checking the operation of the windscreen washers been overcome by the pungent smell of the fluid. The threat of bacterial growth in the washer system should not be overlooked.

It is quite common to find old screen wash solidifying and this will result in blocked washers. The screen wash does need to be topped up using a suitable additive, but an occasional rinse out of the system is also a good idea. One of the methods we have found effective is to use a denture cleaning tablet in a drop of warm water.

Empty out the washer reservoir, then fill with the warm water mixture and flush through the system, operating the washers for short bursts. Then flush with clean water before adding a new mix of washer fluid.